R4800-2

EDUCATION WEEK

American Education's Newspaper of Record | Volume XI, Number 35 · May 20, 1992 | © 1992 Editorial Projects in Education / $3.00

School Panelists Found Liable in Chicago Bias Suit

Some Fear Impact On Local Councils

By Ann Bradley

A decision by a federal-court jury to hold four black members of a Chicago school council personally liable for dismissing a white principal has raised concern that the verdict will put a damper on Chicagoans' willingness to serve on the councils, observers said last week.

The jury on May 4 ordered the council members to pay punitive damages ranging from $1,000 to $3,000 each after finding that they had discriminated against Walter Pilditch, the former principal of Morgan Park High School, on account of his race.

Mr. Pilditch, who lost his job in 1990, filed suit under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is the first Chicago principal to win such a "reverse discrimination" lawsuit.

He was awarded $62,085 in compensatory damages for lost wages and the "pain and suffering" caused by the council's decision.

At least half a dozen other principals have filed complaints with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleging that they were discriminated against by their school councils because of

Continued on Page 18

'You're in the Classroom Now'

Military Retirees Are Joining the Teaching Force

Bruce Michael Lipsky

"I couldn't have picked a better second career," says Jerome Rudolph.

By Daniel Gursky

After serving 30 years in the U.S. Navy, Jerome Rudolph probably could have found a civilian job almost anywhere he wanted.

His distinguished military career included stints as a back-up dentist for the White House, the head of operations for the Navy's worldwide dental corps, and an aide to the U.S. Surgeon General in Washington.

To the bewilderment of some of his friends—and to the delight of the Jacksonville, Fla., public schools—Mr. Rudolph decided to put his vast experience, including two advanced degrees and postgraduate studies in microbiology, to use as a high-school mathematics and science teacher.

"It's been a tremendous challenge, but I just love it," said Mr. Rudolph, who, at age 59, is nearing the end of his first year at Matthew W. Gilbert Middle School. "I couldn't have picked a better second career."

Mr. Rudolph is far from alone. Al-

Continued on Page 16

Cincinnati Cuts More Than Half Of Central Office

'Bombshell' Plan Frees $16 Million for Schools

By Daniel Gursky

Cincinnati's schools superintendent last week unveiled a drastic reorganization of the district's bureaucracy that slashes the number of central-office administrators by more than half and transfers control of day-to-day business operations to a business-trained "vice president."

The organizational structure presented by Superintendent J. Michael Brandt for the 50,000-student district reduces the number of central-office administrators from 127 to 62. In addition, 27 non-administrative support-staff positions have been eliminated, as have 50 clerical jobs.

In all, the streamlining will save the Cincinnati schools approximately $16 million over the next two years. Mr. Brandt has pledged to put those savings directly into schools.

"This is a statement to this community that we want to improve direct services to children," said Mr. Brandt, who has introduced an array of reforms since assuming the district's top post last August.

Tom Mooney, the president of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, called the announcement "the big bombshell everybody has been waiting for" since last fall's

Continued on Page 13

Vt. Forced To Delay Goal of Expanding Assessment System

By Robert Rothman

Vermont's pioneering assessment program, the first large-scale attempt to evaluate student performance on the basis of portfolios, has fallen short of its goal of expanding statewide this year.

The program started on a pilot basis in 144 schools in the 1990-91 school year, and state officials had planned to evaluate portfolios from every school in the state this spring.

Particularly in the case of the mathematics assessment, however, the proposed expansion has proved too ambitious for many schools. Teachers were saddled with too many other responsibilities to take time to score the portfolios, officials said.

Moreover, in several places the reforms in curriculum and instruction needed to implement the new form of assessment have not yet taken hold.

As a result, when teachers gathered in Barre, Castleton, and St. Johnsbury early this month for a three-day scoring session, only half of the 300 teachers needed to score the math portfolios took part in the process.

And several districts—including Burl-

Continued on Page 21

Once Forgotten, Geography Maps Out Place in Schools

By Debra Viadero

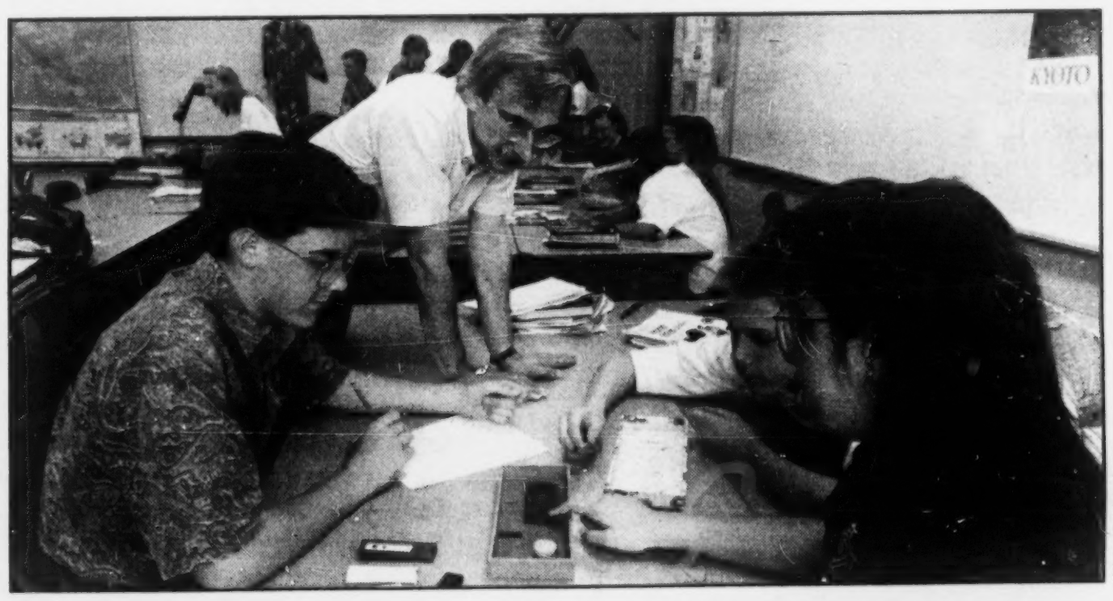
At the University of Tennessee this spring, geography professors had to turn students away from their classes.

At New Trier High School in Winnetka, Ill., more than 500 students are taking elective classes in geography.

And high-school educators in Frederick County, Md., last year began teaching a separate geography course for the first time in two decades.

To many proponents of geography education, these are signs that their discipline, having once nearly disappeared from the school curriculum, is making a comeback. Geography is one of only a handful of subjects mentioned in the national education goals fashioned in 1989 by the President and the na-

Continued on Page 14



Margie Garrison

Michael Roessler uses items from Japan to teach about the country. He recalls that it was once "difficult to find good teaching materials" in the subject.

Also in the news

5 **Mulling Math Standards**
The National Assessment Governing Board is weighing new standards for student math performance.

10 **More Bucks for Big Bird?**
Critics are questioning the use of federal funds for public-broadcasting groups that profit from merchandising.

23 **Common Ground**
A liberal and a conservative House member join to push an overhaul of the child-support payment system.

IN SUMMARY

Comfort in Crisis
Educators who have faced such crises as the hostage-taking and killings in a rural California high school this month have learned to reach out to others through informal networks, experts say. **Page 4.**

Immunity for School Districts
A ruling by a federal appeals court in California may provide a growing number of school districts with a shield against certain types of lawsuits brought against them in federal courts. **Page 5.**

Iowa Inks NCATE Pact
With Iowa's largest universities withdrawn from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, the state and NCATE agree to joint reviews of teacher-training programs. **Page 8.**

Aggies Accredited
Texas A&M University is the first public teacher-training school in that state to win national accreditation since the legislature restricted the number of teacher-preparation courses in state schools. **Page 8.**

Changing Elementary Schools
California's elementary-school curriculum should be made more challenging and geared toward character development, a state task force urged last week. **Page 19.**

Indian 'Fiscal Crisis'
Native American educators are charging that the Bureau of Indian Affairs so severely underfunds its schools that many have cut programs and laid off staff this year. **Page 22.**

'Offensive' Ban Overturned
A federal district judge in New York City has struck down federal regulations prohibiting the use of federal funds for AIDS-prevention materials that could be considered "offensive." **Page 22.**

Capital Update	25
Colleges	8
Commentary	26 and 36
Deadlines	30
Events	28
Federal File	22
Focus On: Administrators	6
Health	11
Letters	27
Marketplace	31
Private Schools	12
State Journal	19

EDUCATION WEEK (ISSN 0277-4232) is published 40 times per year (weekly except for the first week in January, the last week in June, the month of July, the last three weeks in August, and the last two weeks in December) by Editorial Projects in Education, Incorporated. Editorial and advertising sales offices are located at 4301 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 250, Washington, D.C. 20008. (202) 364-4114. Subscriptions: U.S.: $59.94 for 40 issues. Canada: $82.94 for 40 issues. Foreign: $124.94 (airmail) and $92.94 (surface mail) for 40 issues. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to EDUCATION WEEK, P.O. Box 2083, Marion, Ohio 43305. Volume XI, Issue 35. (USPS# 599-870)

ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONAL

Survey Finds Small Businesses Lament Lack of Basic Skills

More than half of small businesses have problems finding applicants for entry-level positions who possess the basic skills needed for the jobs, according to a survey by the National Alliance of Business.

The survey of 233 companies with 500 or fewer employees found that 70 percent reported difficulty finding applicants with sufficient writing skills to handle an entry-level job.

About 62 percent of those responding had trouble finding applicants with the necessary math skills, and 59 percent reported problems finding potential employees with sufficient reading skills.

The survey asked small-business leaders about the importance of the five foundation skills and seven competencies identified by the U.S. Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, or SCANS.

More than 98 percent of those responding said good listening skills for receiving instructions in the workplace are fairly important to very important for entry-level jobs. Sixty-four percent of the respondents said they had difficulty finding applicants who could adequately receive and act on oral instructions from supervisors.

■ **The overwhelming majority of American students believe that the four white Los Angeles police officers virtually acquitted of beating Rodney King do not believe they were innocent,** according to a new national poll.

The survey, conducted by Chilton Research Services for Scholastic Inc., also found that many students fear the verdict will worsen race relations in their communities.

The survey showed that only 7 percent of the students polled believed that the main reason the officers were exonerated by the Simi Valley jury was their innocence. Some 24 percent believed it was because of their race, and 19 percent because they are police officers.

Black and Hispanic students were more likely than whites to see racial motivations behind the verdict.

The students also expressed a lack of confidence in the integrity of the U.S. judicial system following the verdict. Sixty-eight percent of those polled said the system does not treat all people fairly. The percentage was even higher among high-school students (74 percent).

Over all, 43 percent of students polled said the verdict would affect race relations in their own communities; black students (56 percent) were especially concerned about future race relations.

The firm polled a random sample of 2,951 students in grades 3 through 12 on May 6 and 7. ■

STATES

Minn. Panel Balks at Ordering End to Use of Indian Mascots

A committee of the Minnesota Board of Education voted 5 to 3 last week to reject a proposed September 1993 deadline for a mandatory ban on all Native American mascots, logos, and nicknames in the state's public schools.

The committee also asked for an opinion from the Minnesota attorney general on whether the board has statutory authority to order an end to the Indian-related names.

The vote was the latest move in a debate that first gained attention in the state three years ago, when a group of Native Americans asked the board to remove what they described as racist symbols from public schools. Since then, the board has raised the issue with all 50 districts in which the mascots were found, almost half of which have relinquished the contested nicknames.

The board's current policy supports self-determination in the matter, but urges districts to consider the potential damage of the imagery.

Al Zdon, the board committee's chairman, said that Native Americans in the state do not have a uniform reaction to the issue. His committee had responded to initial complaints by interviewing various groups of Native Americans, including tribal councils on reservations and representatives of urban populations. Urban Indians tend to object to the mascots, he said, while rural populations seem to find them either a source of pride or an insignificant issue.

Mr. Zdon, who voted to abolish the symbols, sees a trend toward prohibition of Indian nicknames in school athletics.

"It is a real tough issue within the Indian community. At what point do you stop doing it voluntarily and see the damage being done to children?" Mr. Zdon said. ■

DISTRICTS

California Judge Rules Scouts Violated Twins' Civil Rights

In what is apparently the first ruling against the Boy Scouts of America in a religious-discrimination case, a California judge has found that the youth group violated the civil rights of twin Cub Scouts by refusing to advance them in rank because they would not "swear a duty to God."

Orange County Superior Court Judge Richard O. Frazee made the "tentative decision" earlier this month, saying that he intends to order a permanent injunction against the Orange County Council of the Boy Scouts to prevent it from penalizing the 10-year-old brothers, Michael and William Randall, because of their religious beliefs.

Judge Frazee found that the Boy Scouts qualified as a "business establishment" under state civil-rights law and, therefore, could not discriminate against its patrons. The judge also rejected the Scouts' claim to the constitutionally guaranteed rights of free association.

At a January 1991 den meeting, the boys said they did "not know what God was" and would not pledge a duty to God in order to earn a badge and advance in their Cub Scout group.

"I'm pleased by [the decision]," said James G. Randall, the boys' father, a lawyer who represented them in the case. "It's a vindication for us."

The Boy Scouts intend to appeal, a lawyer for the group, George A. Davidson, said.

■ **A federal judge has rejected an Oregon student's challenge to his school's mandatory drug-testing policy for athletes.**

James Acton, a student at the Washington Grade School in Vernonia, refused to participate in the district's drug-testing program, required for all student athletes. The 12-year-old's parents charged that the policy violates their son's state and federal constitutional right not to undergo unlawful search.

The district's three-year-old policy is unique in the state and one of a handful nationwide. It requires an annual urinalysis of all athletes in grades 7 through 12, followed by random weekly tests throughout the year. Students with positive results are permitted to continue playing sports if they

A 'Heavenly' Science Center

Oregon educators appear to have found a heavenly site in the state's mountainous interior to build a science center that would offer children unparalleled access to natural resources.

The only problem is that the property was once a "heaven on earth" home for a commune of religious followers of the Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.

The Bhagwan has long since fled the country to avoid arrest on various charges, and later died in India, leaving a trail of unhappy and wary former neighbors in his wake.

Members of the commune, which dispersed following its leader's departure, were viewed as a nuisance by local residents, who charged, among other things, that they tried to rig local elections.

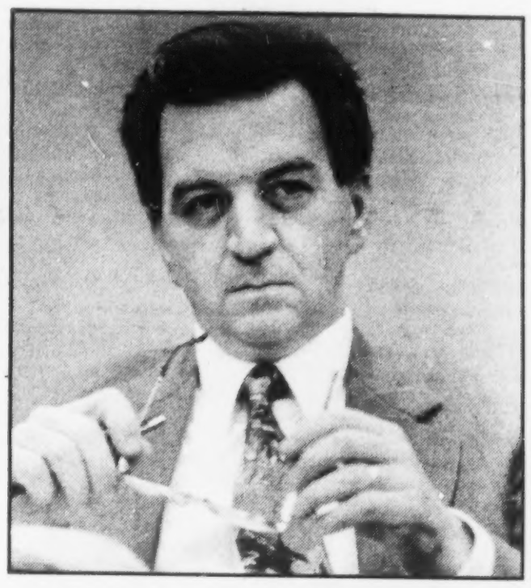
Nevertheless, officials of the state education department, the Oregon Museum of Science, and the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators met with Wasco County officials this month to discuss plans to rezone the 25-acre tract to accommodate the project.

The owner of the land, Dennis Washington, a Montana industrialist, is spending millions of dollars to renovate the Big Muddy Ranch—also officially known as "Rancho Rajneesh"—and has offered to lease it to the state for $1 a year for the next 25 years.

Norma S. Paulus, the state superintendent of public instruction, said last week that the science center would be privately funded by foundations and other independent backers. The museum would then manage the facility, which would serve public-school students.

While they hope to conclude negotiations soon and to hold some classes on the property next month, state officials noted that they will have to overcome a great deal of caution in the surrounding communities that stems from unsavory publicity generated by the Bhagwan's adherents.

A spokesman noted, for example, that baseless rumors already are circulating that participants in the negotiations are affiliated with the religious sect. —P.W.



Rhett Wieland

The system's regional coordinators met recently using interactive video, left. "The quality of the system varies markedly from one region to the next," says Nelson Walls, above.

ment," says Mr. Megna, the Winthrop superintendent.

"When your decisions are subject to the scrutiny of a monitor or another person," he adds, "they tend to be a little different than when they're made in the lateness of the night looking through the catalogue to see what's available on Tuesdays because Tuesday is the only good day to take the class. This process requires you to be more reflective."

Brenda Chaisson, the principal of Chelsea Elementary School, says she had never consciously thought about a lot of the issues she now keeps track of in her portfolio. "You were doing the job on a day-to-day basis," she notes. "This really makes you stop and evaluate what it is you're doing on the job."

Breaking Down Isolation

In addition to helping the administrators chart their professional-development course, the system of mentors and support teams also helps break down the isolation many educators feel in their jobs, administrators here say. The system gives them the opportunity to meet their colleagues and hear what people are doing in other schools and districts.

As part of that effort, the regional consortia have undertaken an array of professional-development activities related to the reform law's 13 knowledge areas. The Kennebec consortium, for example, which includes Augusta, has sponsored a series of workshops, led by administrators with expertise in such areas as technology, school law, cooperative learning, and equity.

"At each one I've attended," Ms. Chaisson says, "I've been able to bring something back and use it. They have been on-target, focused, and practical."

Furthermore, she says, the workshop leaders live and work in the area, so there is more opportunity for meaningful follow-up.

The Maine Leadership Consortium, a coalition that includes all of the state's largest education organizations, has coordinated the work of the regional groups and has offered its own training activities, including well-attended leadership forums and a summer leadership academy.

In a state like Maine, with its many remote towns far from the capital, coordinating the activities of a diverse assembly of regional support systems has proved challenging.

A recent meeting of the regional coordinators was conducted using interactive television, with seven people sitting around a conference table at the University of Maine at Augusta and four others participating from different sites via video.

Nelson Walls, the Maine Leadership Consortium's executive director, acknowledges that the video set-up is far from perfect and tends to make for a rather stilted meeting. But it is the best available option for linking the distant locations.

The regional system, while bringing administrators together, has another, more significant, drawback.

"The quality of the system varies markedly from one region to the next," Mr. Walls says. "This is a professional-development-driven system, and if the folks involved in the system are not naturally inclined to understand the relationship between the nature of their work and the need to continually learn, then the system isn't as strong."

The regions where the system is working well, he adds, tend to be those where one or two people are providing strong leadership.

A related concern involves administrators who move from one region to another in the middle of their recertification process. So far, however, the regional coordinators say that has not posed significant problems. Mr. Clockedile, the superintendent of district 3, says he had to change some elements of his action plan to better fit his new work situation when he changed jobs and regions, but he found similar expectations for recertification in the two regions.

The Threat of Budget Cuts

Aside from such relatively minor logistical issues as transfers between regions, Mr. Walls sees a bigger threat to the recertification reforms from Maine's continuing fiscal problems. The amount of state money going to the system has been reduced, and cuts in funds for items such as travel and workshops have had indirect effects on administrators' opportunities for professional development.

Groups such as the Maine Leadership Consortium have stepped up their activities, and their spending, to try to make up for state budget cuts, but Mr. Walls does not see that as a long-term solution.

"For all the good that this system brings," he says, "the state can't be complacent about it and fail to give it the financial support down the road it's going to require."

After her early doubts, Dorothy D'Alessandro, the Waterville special-education director, wants the new system to survive. And she provides an example of its benefits.

Through her knowledge-area assessment, Ms. D'Alessandro realized she needed to work on her staff-development skills.

"I was not comfortable with getting up in front of a group of people and organizing an in-service," she says. "So I was forced to come to grips with that in the process."

By making staff development a focus of her action plan, Ms. D'Alessandro says, her skills in that area improved to the point where she now gets requests to present workshops in other districts.

"In the traditional method [of recertification], the benefits were just for me," she says. "In this process, there were benefits that went beyond me and into my district." ■

And the role of the teachers in participating in leadership at the building level has changed dramatically over the decade.

There's also been a big change in the role of administrators. We have very strongly advocated the role of the principal as that of an educational or instructional leader. We've spent a substantial amount of time and money training the principals to function in that role.

Q. Do you see some lessons for other superintendents from your experience in Pittsburgh?

A. I'm convinced that a lot of what was done here could be done in other places. I think that having a very strong data orientation, setting priorities based on data, engaging in long-range planning, [and] engaging in a lot of staff-development work to improve the performance of teachers and administrators [are things] that can be done and should be done in any community.

Given that approach, we can increase the longevity of superintendents in a given community.

Q. After you retire, you're going to the University of Pittsburgh to join the faculty of a superintendent-preparation program. How does the approach there differ from the preparation that most superintendents now receive?

A. The program has four domains to it. The first is called vision because we believe a person cannot lead unless he has a vision of what education ought to be. The second domain is called data orientation, which reflects some of the things I've talked about. The third domain reflects the need for organizational and professional development, which essentially deals with the continuing professional development of teachers and administrators, and also the development of schools as effective problem-solving institutions. And then the fourth domain is management.

It's hoped that the people coming out of the program . . . will be well-prepared to lead school districts effectively.

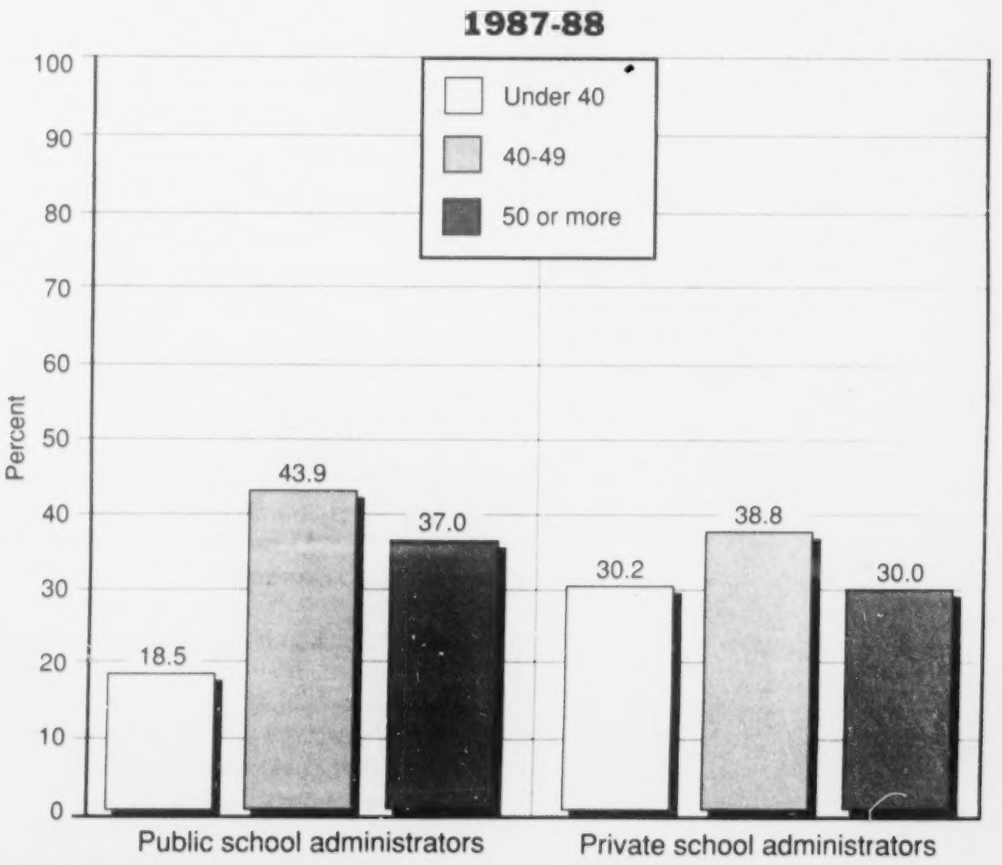
Q. Some people have lately proposed getting rid of the position of urban superintendent and transferring a lot of that person's duties to schools. What do you think of that idea?

A. I think that's very unwise. The problems in most urban districts across the nation are not with the superintendents; they're with [school] boards. I think there are ways to improve the quality of educational leadership on the part of superintendents and ways to improve the quality of boards. ■

DIMENSIONS

Age Of School Administrators

1987-88



SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics